

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04633 01 OF 02 101626Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----028935 101639Z /42

O 101516Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9179
AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
WHITE HOUSE WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 4633

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, LE
SUBJECT: SITUATION IN BEIRUT

REF: (A) STATE 200854 (TOSEC 090067), (B) BEIRUT 4616

1. FOLLOWING IS FULLER ACCOUNT CONVERSATION KINSOLVING AND
I HAD WITH SARKIS AND BOUTROS MORNING AUGUST 10.

2. AFTER OUR DISCUSSION OF SOUTH, I FAVE BOUTROS AND SARKIS
FLAVOR OF DISCUSSIONS QUANT AND AMBASSADOR LEWIS HAD HAD WITH
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 04633 01 OF 02 101626Z

ISRAELI LEADERS DAY BEFORE, READING TO THEM SELECTED
EXTRACTS FROM TEL AVIV 10204. I SAID THE ISRAELIS WERE
OBVIOUSLY VERY AGITATED ABOUT SITUATION HERE AND APPEARED
SINCERELY TO BELIEVE THAT SYRIANS WERE PLANNING TO MASSACRE
THE CHRISTIANS. INDEED, BEGIN HAD SAID HE HAD RELIABLE
INFORMATION THAT THIS WAS TO OCCUR BETWEEN THE 8TH AND 10TH
OF AUGUST. SARKIS COMMENTED THAT TTIS WAS OF COURSE ALL

BASHIR GEMAYEL'S HOGWASH. I SAID THIS WAS ABSOLUTELY CORRECT, BUT BEGIN APPEARED TO BE CONVINCED HIS SOURCES WERE BETTER THAN OURS AND THAT WE DID NOT REALLY UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION. (I DIDN'T MENTION THAT PRESIDENT HAD RECENTLY TOLD A CALLER THAT AMERICANS DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION HERE EITHER.)

3. I SAID WE, TOO, WERE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE SITUATION, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE LOSS OF LIFE AND THE DANGERS TO THE LEBANESE STATE, BUT ALSO BECAUSE WE THOUGHT THAT IF SITUATION DETERIORATED FURTHER IT MIGHT WELL PROVOKE ISRAELI INTERVENTION. INDEED, ISRAELIS WERE ARGUING THAT SYRIANS WERE GOING TO BEGIN MASSACRE OF CHRISTIANS IN ORDER TO DERAIL THE SEPTEMBER 5 SUMMIT. WE HAD HAD A NUMBER OF POLICY DISCUSSIONS WITHIN THE USG ON THIS SUBJECT AND HAD DECIDED WE SHOULD TRY TO PROMOTE A MINI ARAB SUMMIT CONSISTING OF THE CONTRIBUTORS TO THE ADF PLUS THOSE STATES WHICH WERE FINANCING IT; TO WIT, SAUDI ARABIA, KUWAIT, SUDAN, THE EMIRATES AND SYRIA, PLUS LEBANON. INSTRUCTIONS HAD GONE OUT TO THE APPROPRIATE POSTS IN THE AREA TO MAKE APPROACHES TO THEIR HOST GOVERNMENTS URGING THAT THEY SUPPORT SUCH A SUMMIT. ON LEARNING OF THIS I HAD ASKED THE DEPARTMENT TO HOLD UP THE ACTION UNTIL I COULD HAVE TIME TO CONSULT THE LEBANESE, BECAUSE THEIR COOPERATION WOULD BE ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF SUCH AN ENDEAVOR. I WAS HERE TO ASK THEIR OPINION.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 04633 01 OF 02 101626Z

4. SARKIS ASKED WHAT THE AGENDA OF THE CONFERENCE WOULD BE. I SAID IT WAS TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION IN BEIRUT AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF DISENGAGEMENT AND PERHAPS AUGMENTATION OF THE ADF WITH TROOPS FROM OTHER ARAB STATES. SARKIS PONDERED A WHILE AND THEN MADE SEVERAL OBSERVATIONS AS FOLLOWS:

A. THE LEBANESE THEMSELVES HAD NEGOTIATED A CEASE-FIRE AND DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT THE DAY BEFORE. IT WAS TOO EARLY TO SAY WHETHER IT WAS GOING TO WORK, BUT AT LEAST SOME PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE. HE THOUGHT THE AGREEMENT SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO RUN ITS COURSE BEFORE RESORTING TO THE SORT OF INITIATIVE DESCRIBED BY ME.

B. THERE WAS SOMETHING TO BE SAID FOR HAVING A SUMMIT CONFERENCE, BUT HE DID NOT THINK IT COULD PRODUCE ANYTHING MORE FAVORABLE TO LEBANON THAN THE RIYADH AND CAIRO DECISIONS. THOSE DECISIONS UNFORTUNATELY, HAD NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED FOR VARIOUS REASONS, AND THE LEBANESE HAD THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO HAVE A NEW CONFERENCE EIGHTEEN MONTHS LATER TO RENDER AN ACCOUNTING AND SEE WHAT COULD BE DONE TO IMPLEMENT THE DECISIONS. THE IMPORTANT THING WAS THAT SUCH A CONFERENCE BE CAREFULLY ARRANGED SO IT WOULD

BE SUCCESSFUL. IT WAS EASIER TO HAVE A CONFERENCE THAN
TO ASSURE ITS SUCCESS.

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04633 02 OF 02 101629Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----029032 101644Z /42

O 101516Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9180
AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
WHITE HOUSE WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 4633

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

C. IF A CONFERENCE WERE TO BE CONVENED, ITS AGENDA
WOULD HAVE TO BE MUCH LARGER THAN JUST THE BEIRUT SITUATION.
THE CONFERENCE WOULD HAVE TO DISCUSS THE ENTIRE QUESTION OF
LEBANON, MEANING THE PALESTINIANS, THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS,
THE ISRAELIS IN THE SOUTH AND EVERYTHING ELSE. IT COULD
NOT BE RESTRICTED TO JUST BEIRUT.

D. THE KEY TO THE SUCCESS OR THE HOLDING OF ANY SUCH
CONFERENCE WAS THE SYRIANS. IF THE SYRIANS WERE NOT IN
AGREEMENT, THERE WAS NO SENSE IN TRYING TO HAVE A CONFERENCE.
IF SYRIA WAS IN AGREEMENT, IT MIGHT ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 04633 02 OF 02 101629Z

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS IT WAS SYRIA THAT MUST IMPLEMENT THE DECISIONS.

5. I SAID I UNDERSTOOD THESE POINTS AND AGREED WITH THEM. HOWEVER, AHERTON WAS NOW IN SAUDI ARABIA AND UNDOUBTEDLY HAD RAISED THE SUBJECT, AT LEAST IN A GENERAL WAY, WITH THE SAUDIS. THE SAUDIS MIGHT WELL TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE A SUMMIT. IN THE MEANTIME, HOW DID THE LEBANESE FEEL ABOUT US APPROACHING THE SYRIANS AND OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES INVOLVED? SARKIS REFLECTED AND THEN SAID HE THOUGHT IT WAS A BAD IDEA. THE INITIATIVE SHOULD COME FROM THE ARABS. IF WE COULD GET THE SAUDIS TO CARRY THE BALL AND IF THEY COULD CONVINCE THE SYRIANS, FINE. IF WE WENT TO THE SYRIANS AND THE OTHER ARABS, IT WOULD BE CLEAR THAT THIS WAS AN AMERICAN INITIATIVE. THE FACT THAT WE OURSELVES WERE OUT PUSHING THE PROPOSAL WOULD MEAN THE SYRIANS WOULD HAVE TO REFUSE IT. WE SHOULD LEAVE IT TO THE SAUDIS. IN SHORT, THE LEBANESE WOULD RATHER WE NOT PURSUE THIS MATTER FOR THE TIME BEING WITH THE OTHER ARABS.

6. I ASKED SARKIS IF HE COULD GIVE ME ANY DETAILS OF THE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT. HE SAID THE SYRIANS WERE TO RETIRE FROM CERTAIN POSITIONS IN THE CENTER OF ASHRAFIEH AND REGROUP NEAR THE RIZK TOWER. THE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES WERE TO OCCUPY THE POSITIONS VACATED. THE SYRIANS WERE ALSO TO VACATE THE QARANTINA BRIDGE OR AT LEAST NOT TO CONTROL TRAFFIC OVER IT, WHICH WOULD BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LEBANESE. THE LEBANESE WERE IN CONTROL OF THE BRIDGE WHEN WE PASSED OVER IT AT 1130 LOCAL.) FOR THEIR PART, THE PHALANGE WERE GOING TO KEEP ARMED PEOPLE OFF THE STREETS AND REFRAIN FROM SNIPING. AN ORDER TO THIS EFFECT HAD GONE OUT FROM BASHIR GEMAYEL. THE PORT WOULD BE OPENED IN A FEW DAYS. IT WAS TOO EARLY TO SAY THAT THIS AGREEMENT WAS FIRM, BUT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 04633 02 OF 02 101629Z

AT LEAST THEY WERE MAKING SOME PROGRESS.

7. I ASKED IF CAMILLE CHAMOUN AND BASHIR GEMAYEL WERE ON BOARD. HE SAID CAMILLE WAS AND THAT AMINE AND PIERRE HAD TAKEN RESPONSIBILITY FOR BASHIR'S PERFORMANCE. BASHIR WAS VERY SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE ARRANGEMENT, HOWEVER. I NOTED HE HAD BEEN VERY SKEPTICAL WHEN I SPOKE TO HIM YESTERDAY MORNING.

8. COMMENT: ALL OF US HAVE OUR FINGERS CROSSED THAT THE CEASE-FIRE WILL HOLD. EXPERIENCE WITH NUMEROUS SUCH ARRANGEMENTS IN THE PAST THREE YEARS DOES NOT FILL ONE

WITH CONFIDENCE, HOWEVER. THE MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT IS THAT SARKIS SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN THE MATTER IN HAND AND TO HAVE BEEN FIRM WITH THOSE CONCERNED. BOUTROS SAID SARKIS HAD LEANED VERY HEAVILY ON THE SYRIANS WHO HAD AGREED VERY RELUCTANTLY TO WITHDRAW FROM THE MORE SENSITIVE POSITIONS IN THE VICINITY OF CHAMOUN'S HOUSE AND THE SASSINE SQUARE. IF SARKIS CAN ACTUALLY MAKE THE SYRIANS DELIVER, AND PIERRE AND AMINE GEMAYEL ARE ABLE TO RESTRAIN BASHIR, IT WILL BE A GREAT LEAP FORWARD.

9. I SHARE THE VIEW EXPRESSED BY SARKIS AND BOUTROS THAT IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE FOR USG TO APPEAR AS PRIME MOVER BEHIND WHAT SHOULD BE ESSENTIALLY AN ARAB INITIATIVE. I AM FULLY AWARE OF OUR DRIVING COMPULSION TO DO SOMETHING AND SUFFER FROM IT MYSELF. FOR US TO PUSH THE ARABS, HOWEVER, IS GOING TO LOOK LIKE INTERFERENCE IN A FAMILY QUARREL. WHAT THE ARABS NEED OUT OF US AT THIS POINT IS FOR US TO EXERCISE OUR INFLUENCE ON THE ISRAELIS. IN THIS REGARD I FIND DEEPLY DISTURBING THE HYSTERICAL ACCENTS IN WHICH ISRAELI LEADERS ARE NOW SPEAKING OF THE SITUATION HERE. I SHARE FULLY THEIR CONCERN ABOUT INNOCENT CHRISTIAN LIVES BUT WOULD TAKE THAT CONCERN MORE SERIOUSLY DID I NOT KNOW THAT IT WAS OTHER CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE BEEN LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVOKING THEIR DEATHS. ALLEGATION THAT SYRIANS ARE OUT TO MASSACRE THE CHRISTIANS OR
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 04633 02 OF 02 101629Z

ELIMINATE THEM IS SORT OF CANARD THAT GOES OVER VERY WELL IN NEWSPAPERS. IF JUST DOES NOT HAPPEN TO BE TRUE, AND IT IS IRRESPONSIBLE OF ISRAELI LEADERS AND ISRAELI MEDIA TO TALK IN THESE TERMS. WEIZMAN OBVIOUSLY KNOWS BETTER. SOME WAY SHOULD BE FOUND TO CONVINCE BEGIN. PERHAPS WE COULD ARRANGE FOR HIM TO VISIT KATAEB HEADQUARTERS.
PARKER

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, MEETING REPORTS, MEETINGS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, PEACE TALKS, NEGOTIATIONS, CAT -B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT04633
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS/8/10/08 FMACHAK 25X6
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: P850083-2507
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197808124/demeuaag.tel
Line Count: 261
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: bfd6f759-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Reference: 78 STATE 200854, 78 BEIRUT 4616
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1589292
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 20010601; <DBA CHANGED> mcm 20010914
Subject: SITUATION IN BEIRUT
TAGS: MILI, PREL, MCAP, PGOV, PBOR, MOPS, PINT, SY, LE, IS, (SARKIS, ILYAS), (BOUTROS, IOANNIS)
To: STATE AMMAN SS
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bfd6f759-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014